



COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS

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Collaborating for a Better State of Health

Who Are CHWs And What Do They Do?

- **A Community Health Worker (CHW)** is a public health outreach professional who applies his or her unique understanding of the experience, language and/or culture of the populations he or she serves in order to carry out one or more of the following roles:

Roles of a CHW

- Providing culturally appropriate health education, information and outreach in community-based settings, such as homes, schools, clinics, shelters, local businesses, and community centers;
- Bridging/culturally mediating between individuals, communities and health and human services, including actively building individual and community capacity;
- Assuring that people access the services they need;
- Providing direct services, such as informal counseling, social support, care coordination and health screenings; and
- Advocating for individual and community needs.

A CHW is distinguished from other health professionals

Primarily for his or her understanding of the populations and communities he or she serves.

Conducting outreach a significant portion of the time.

Having experience in providing services in community settings.



Source: "Foundations for Community Health Workers". Tim Berthold, Jeni Miller, Alma Avila-Esparza. 2009



The Benefits of CHWs

As a result of the work of CHWs, clients and communities learn new information and skills, increase their confidence, and enhance their ability to successfully advocate for themselves. Most important the work that CHWs do reduces persistent health inequalities or differences in the rates of illness, disability, and death among different communities.

Source: "Foundations for Community Health Workers". Tim Berthold, Jeni Miller, Alma Avila-Esparza. 2009

IMPROVING
TOGETHER



Qualities and Values of CHWs

- The work of a CHW depends heavily on building positive interpersonal relationships with people of diverse backgrounds and identities. Without the capacity to build relationships based on trust, CHWs cannot do their job effectively.

Personal Characteristics of Successful CHWs

Personal Characteristics

- ❑ Interpersonal warmth
- ❑ Trustworthiness
- ❑ Open-mindedness
- ❑ Objectivity
- ❑ Sensitivity
- ❑ Competence
- ❑ Commitment to social justice
- ❑ Good psychological health
- ❑ Self-awareness and understanding



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Public Health Defined

“the complete state of physical, mental, and social well-being, not just the absence of disease.”

World Health Organization



Public Health Emphasizes Prevention

□ **The Spectrum of Prevention**

- Strengthening Individual Knowledge and Skills
- Promoting Community Education
- Educating Providers
- Fostering Coalitions and Networks
- Changing Organizational Practices
- Influencing Policy and Legislation

CHW Collaborations

Health Care System

- Provide outreach to assist community members to understand and access health care services
- Provide health education
- Assist clients with enrollment in health insurance programs
- Act as navigators, assisting clients to figure out how to access providers and services
- Advocate for clients to ensure culturally competent services
- Link people to health care services and follow up to ensure clients understand their health issues and treatment

Source: “Foundations for Community Health Workers”. Tim Berthold, Jeni Miller, Alma Avila-Esparza. 2009

CHW Collaborations

Community Members

- Sharing knowledge and raising awareness about health issues affecting a community
- Assisting the community to identify local resources and needs
- Sharing information about how public policies are created and changed
- Providing training, i.e. facilitating meetings, conducting a community diagnosis.
- Bringing people together and facilitating discussions in which community members can identify problems and brainstorm solutions
- Supporting leadership within the community and assisting them to break down big goals into action steps

CHW Collaborations

□ **Legislators/Policy Makers**

- Conduct research on health inequalities and outstanding needs in the community
- Conduct outreach, education, and mobilization to inform community members about important health issues
- Testify to policymakers who are considering legislation on specific health issues important to your community
- Participate in public meetings and rallies on health issues
- Collect stories about important health issues or encourage your clients to share their stories and speak out
- Write letters to legislators, regulators, and providers about issues or concern in your community



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